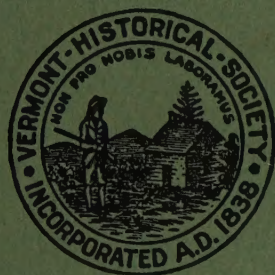


NEW SERIES

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PROCEEDINGS  
of the  
VERMONT  
*Historical Society*



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The Autobiography of John Whittemore, 1796-1885

James Duane of New York. *A Review*

Vermont Letters. *A Series. II*

Postscript

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PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY

DECEMBER

1938

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Proceedings  
of the  
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Historical Society



DECEMBER  
1938



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Our next issue will cover the story of the one hundred and first meeting of the Society, and in addition Professor Robert Davis will contribute an article entitled, "Heroic Buffoon." This article was accepted by the staff of what is supposed to be a leading national magazine of high intellectual and literary quality. Fortunately, the editor-in-chief of the magazine returned from a vacation and decided that he was right and his colleagues were wrong; so we have the good fortune, through the editor's perspicuity and Professor Davis' kindness, to publish what is a most interesting study of a village type familiar to Vermonters for more than a century. We are interested, also, in other village types—the oldtime cobbler and singing-master. We shall welcome any leads that may bring diaries, journals, or in lack of these, carefully written papers which are conscientious studies of these social types.

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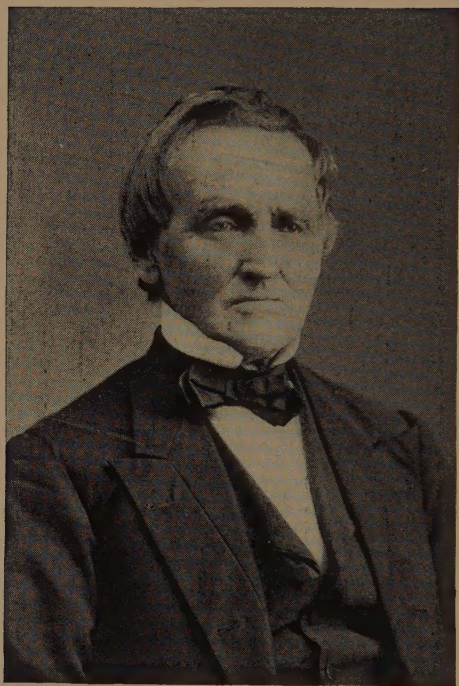
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JOHN WHITTEMORE

P V H S  
Proceedings of the  
Vermont Historical Society  
1938

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NEW SERIES

DECEMBER

VOL. VI No. 4

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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF  
JOHN WHITTEMORE  
1796-1885

*No formal history of Vermont will ever contain in all probability a chapter similar to this autobiography which, we trust, you are about to read—a brave, human story of the long ago, simply, honestly, frankly told by the man who lived it; yet it is our opinion that such a story and such stories belong by every historical right in the history of Vermont and every other state where the John Whittemores lived, toiled, and performed even the little tasks of everyday living “in the light of great principles.” It is much easier to record the statistics of a battle, to trace the results of it, to fashion in apt phrases the glamour of heroic figures, than it is to capture in disobedient words the overtones of the years of dreaming, planning, and achieving that the John Whittemores knew when Vermont and the United States were young. We have examined many an account in diary, journal, and letter form left by a Vermont pioneer, but none has seemed to possess or present the intangible values that make this autobiography so significant—the values that created the Vermont of John Whittemore’s days, that have kept it still in the face of corroding changes of a softer, more cynical, perhaps less courageous, more faithless day, the Vermont we know. If Vermont would keep faith with the past, it must remember its Whittemores. The text we have followed is based on a copy of*



*the original; the copy was loaned to us by the Honorable Elbert S. Brigham who comes of the Whittemore strain. The few editorial changes we have made are entirely minor in character. Editor.*

IN attempting to give a narrative of my life, I am well aware that nothing has transpired that would seem worthy of being recorded or remembered, yet the events of seventy-two years have been so marked by the good Providence of God that I feel it to be my duty to record them to His glory and honor, and leave them to the consideration of my family and friends.

\* \* \* \*

I was born in Lynn, Massachusetts, February 5th, 1796. My parents left that place, before my remembrance, and settled in a place called White Creek, just over the line in the State of New York, not far from Bennington, Vermont.

Some of the circumstances of this journey as related by my mother, I still remember. They started in the winter and the road led across the Green Mountains in Vermont through deep snow, and often over a narrow roadway dug out from the sides of the mountain which rose high above their heads on one hand, and on the other a deep valley.

In passing one of these places, the horses stumbled and fell, and rolled upon their backs, and lay with feet up. My mother threw the babe out upon the snow, and soon had the rest of us out of the sleigh. The horses lay still, being kept from rolling off by a small tree that grew upon the edge of the road.

My father ran down the hill and found some men who were at work in a sawmill, who came to our assistance. They soon cleared the horses from the sleigh by cutting the harness, and the tree was then cut, and the horses rolled down to the foot of the hill, fortunately without much injury.

These very kind friends took us to their house and made us comfortable, assisted my father in repairing his harness, and refused to take any compensation. Next morning we were on our way.

We resided a little more than a year at White Creek, and then removed to St. Albans, Vermont, where we found a house (built?) by my father the fall before, who came on for that purpose.

It was a rude structure, hastily built; a light frame was put together and covered with rough boards on the outside and ceiled up inside with the same. The chimney was made of sticks at the bottom,



and as far up as the chamber floor, and from there up it was made of split sticks laid in square form, one upon the other and plastered over with mortar made of clay and straw.

The first thing I remember was waking up one morning and the sun was shining in our faces, and we were alone, as our parents had stepped out to one of the neighbors. As we lay upon the floor, we were much amused by seeing the squirrels run around upon the timbers over our heads.

My father was a shoemaker by trade and as workmen of like craft were few and far between, he worked not only for his neighbors, but for individuals from adjoining towns.

He soon found it necessary to have a more convenient place to work; accordingly, a small addition was put on one end of the house and fitted up for that purpose.

At this time I was probably about seven years of age, and I had nothing to do but look on and see him work, which I did day after day, and being anxious to do something, I would take small scraps of leather, and cut them apart, and sew them together again. In this way I soon learned to use the awl quite handily, and after a while my father put me to closing shoes and sewing bindings on to boots. I soon had enough to do, and began to be sorry I learned the trade, but it proved to be of some advantage in after life.

My father seemed to enjoy his new home in the country, and could readily conform to the circumstances under which he was placed, but not so my mother. The wild scenery around her; the wants and privations incident to a new country she would contrast with her city life, with its privileges and associations, and she would often sigh for the home of her youth, and the friends she had left, and how anxious she was for the time to come when she could return to her home and visit the loved ones there.

This time was at length set. The next winter they would go, and it was waited for with the fondest anticipations.

The winter came and preparations were made for the journey—but there was no snow. Day after day, and week after week passed but no snow. Thus the winter went by, and with it all hopes for the present were gone.

Journeys, it must be remembered, must be made in the winter on snow, for wagons were but little used in those days, and light one-horse wagons were not known.

Another winter soon came round, and with it an abundance of

snow. Every preparation was made for the journey. The heifer was sold for twelve dollars, and twelve dollars more was obtained in some other way, which made twenty-four dollars. This settled the question as to necessary funds which was the most troublesome one of all. Everything now being in readiness, the time was fixed for the first of January to start, and surely now, nothing could hinder the full enjoyment of the long anticipated happiness.

But, alas! how true, we know not what may be on the morrow. Those days which my mother thought would be the crowning of her happiness, proved the bitterest of her life.

My father was taken sick the last day of December. His decline was rapid, he lived but five days, and died on the fourth of January, 1804.

I watched him closely and saw him breathe his last, and then turning away from the bed, exclaimed aloud: "He is gone and we shall all starve to death!" My aunt caught me in her arms, and with tears in her eyes, said, "No, John, we will take care of you." That little speech she remembered while she lived.

That was indeed a gloomy morning! A few neighbors had come in and showed by their countenances how deeply they were affected by the scene before them. A deep snow had fallen during the night, which made all without look dreary and desolate.

The next thing to be done was to make arrangements for the funeral, and they were made with as much order and propriety as the circumstances of the time would admit. At the appointed time, neighbors and friends came together with such means and accommodations as they had, offering their assistance and their sympathy. When all was in readiness, the procession moved to the courthouse in the village, the only building in town where public meetings could be held.

A short discourse was delivered by the Rev. Jonathan Nye, from these words, "There is no discharge in this war." The hymn was sung, "Why Do We Mourn Departing Friends," to a tune called *Mortality*.

After the services, the procession moved to the cemetery, the remains were buried, and we were left at our home, and the scene was closed.

My mother was now a widow with four fatherless children, one older than myself and two younger, the eldest eleven and the young-

est four. Dark indeed must have been the future to my mother, left with four children and scanty means for their support.

We had a few acres of land, two cows and a horse, with a house open and cold, and every way uncomfortable. The land, the cows and the horse must be taken care of, provided for, as they could be of little use to a family, and who was there that could do it?

But there was yet one source of hope, which I trust was a consolation to my mother. There was the widow's God, and the Father of the fatherless. With these means she undertook the care of the family, a heavy load and one she was poorly fitted to sustain.

Reared in the city, she knew but little of outside affairs, or of the trials and responsibilities of life. Fortunately, what she lacked in knowledge was made up in energy and perseverance. These qualities were remarkably developed in after life.

The first thing needed was a man to do the outside work, and a young man who lived in the neighborhood kindly offered his assistance. He proposed to stay through the winter and do our little business for his board.

In this way we lived on two or three years, when my Uncle (my father's brother), John Whittemore, who lived three or four miles from us, came to see us and seeing how lonely we were, kindly offered to take us all to his house, and keep us till the winter should break up, and spring open. This offer my mother accepted, and we were soon after taken to his home.

My mother, now feeling that her children were provided for, began to think of visiting her friends, a hope she had long indulged, which she could not easily give up. But how it could be done she could not readily see. If she could find some one that was going to Boston that would afford her company she would go, and such a chance she soon found.

Two men of her acquaintance, named Paul and Trowbridge Brigham, two good men and just such company as she could have desired. Mother went to see them. They told her they were going to Boston with a double team, partly to visit some friends, and partly to take some articles to market, and if she chose to go with them, they would assist her on the way. The arrangement was made at once. They were to take charge upon the road, and at night see that her horse was provided for, and in the morning bring it to the door. She on her part, was to make the tea, set the table, and warm up the cold lunch, which we took with us, as was the custom in those days.



The time was fixed when we should start. My mother set about the necessary preparations at once. Myself and next younger sister she would take with her; and at the time appointed we met our two friends in the village and proceeded on our way.

I was at this time nine years of age, and my sister about seven. Our horse we called the old mare, and our sleigh we called a pung. We had no buffalo robes to keep us warm, but one or two quilts, and the horse blankets were used for that purpose. To be seen in such a plight at the present day would create a smile in some and perhaps pity in others.

Our progress was slow, making but thirty or thirty-five miles per day. At length we drew to our journey's end, Leominster, which was some forty miles from Boston, just before night. We fed our horse and took our supper, and it was thought best to move on a little further that night.

Our friends now told us they would have to leave us, as it would be more convenient for them to take another road which led more directly to Boston, but we wanted to go to Medford.

We set off together, but they soon turned to the right, and we were left alone. What a situation to be in! a woman with two children in the night in a strange place, unacquainted with the road, and now quite dark. It was lonely indeed, and to add to our loneliness, the old mare felt her loss. She went on calling for her company, but got no answer. We drove on far enough to stop for the night and then began to look for a sign, which we soon discovered swinging from the corner of the barn.

We drove up to the door and mother sent me in to ask if we could have entertainment for the night. Feeling pretty smart with the big word, I went in and marched up to the bar, and inquired if we could have entertainment there. "Who do you want entertainment for?" they asked. "My mother and two children," I answered. "Oh, yes, my little man, we can keep you," and as I was going out, I heard one of the men that was sitting by say, "That is a little man, sure enough."

The next day we drove into Medford where mother found her friends, two sisters with their families and her mother. With joy and surprise they received her, but what a change came over them when she told them her husband was dead and she was alone with her children.

After spending a few days in Medford, we went to Lynn where

two of my mother's brothers were living, one had a family, the other was single. With these friends we spent a few days, and when the visit was nearly through my mother began to think about returning home. She proposed to her brother to go with her to Vermont, but he declined. She urged it, and friends urged it, but he would not consent. He had seldom been out of sight of the spires of Lynn; and how could he leave all the associations of home? At length he gave over and consented to go. Preparations were made and in a few days he left Lynn with us, and never saw it again. We stopped a few days again in Medford, and during the time, a brother-in-law of my mother took us to the city of Boston. The sight was wonderful to me. Such narrow streets shut in by rows of buildings high and long. Such displays of finery about the doors of the stores, with carved images standing on pedestals. One had a black boy with a broad grin, and white teeth holding a roll of tobacco in his hand. Such sights were new to me, and I became almost frantic with excitement.

In one of the stores, the door being open, we espied our friend Mr. Brigham, one of the men who had accompanied us from home. We were much surprised to meet him, the very man mother wanted to see. She was to have their company home, and the time was fixed when they would meet her at Leominster, where we parted.

We now began to make preparations for leaving, and at the time fixed we were packed into the pung and started for home. We drove hard that day in order to reach Leominster, but our friends were not there. We waited for them through the next day, but they did not come. So it seemed we must go without them, and make our way as best we could. It was a sad disappointment, for we needed their assistance and their company.

My uncle's name was David Martin, a young man about twenty-two years of age, but he knew about as little how to manage affairs as one of us children. He could neither put the harness on the horse, nor take it off. But he was kind and generous and willing to do all he could. So the next morning we set off. We plodded on slowly but without accident or delay, and in about ten days we reached home at my uncle's house, where we found the children we had left.

It was now the middle of March, and the winter was broken. My mother, unwilling to live longer upon the generosity of our uncle, packed up and went back to her own home. Here with what means we had left, such as wood at the door and provisions in the house we were made comfortable for a few months.

My mother and Uncle David saw it was necessary that some shifts be made for future support. He could make light shoes such as women wore, but he knew nothing about coarse work. They found that a merchant in the village by the name of Daniel Ryan would furnish him stock and take all the shoes he could make. Such a chance was readily accepted, and with shop and tools all ready at hand he went to work. He soon acquired a reputation as a workman, and Mr. Ryan found a ready sale for his shoes. His credit was good, and Mr. Ryan would let him have what he wanted and charge it to his account.

Thus matters went on for a few months quite well. He formed acquaintances and found associates, some of whom proved to be to his disadvantage. It was soon evident that he had a taste for strong drink, which was unfortunately fixed in his constitution. He had fallen upon bad times. The community was flooded with rum. It was used upon all occasions, at trainings, at raisings, logging bees, husking bees and bees and bees for everything almost, sure to draw together large companies, and few would leave without signs of intoxication.

There was little respect paid to the Sabbath. It was used as a holiday by all classes. Young men and boys would spend the day in fishing, hunting, playing ball or other sports. Meetings were held at the village but few attended except those who lived nearby. Rev. Jonathan Nye was the officiating clergyman. A Congregational church was organized in St. Albans in 1803, and I believe the Methodists were holding meetings on St. Albans Point.

Surrounded by such influences, my uncle became an easy prey to his besetting infirmity. His employer saw what the result would be and he called for a settlement, when it was found that he was in debt about thirty dollars, and he refused to trust him till this was paid. He would furnish him stock as before, and he might work if he chose, but he must have a note, and my mother must sign it with him, which with much reluctance she did.

He worked quite a while quite steadily, and seemed anxious to pay the note, but at length he became more careless, neglected work, and the note was sued.

It proved quite a troublesome thing to my mother before it was closed.

In the neighborhood about a mile from our house was quite a large establishment where was carried on the tanning and shoemak-



ing business, owned by Christopher Dutcher (Capt. he was called) and his sons. In their shop my uncle found employment for several years or during the time he remained with us. But he made our house his home, and when away from his work (which was too often the case) he would come home and often with a bottle of rum in his pocket. We were always glad to see him, for in spite of his infirmities we liked him. Stepping into the place made vacant by the death of my father, we formed a strong attachment for him. He was kind and generous to a fault, and was of great service to the family in helping us through the most trying period of our life.

By his help we could get a small piece of land plowed and planted to corn in the Spring, and he would help us to take care of it through the summers. We took good care of it; it grew finely, and we would often have the best corn in the neighborhood, but it would usually be destroyed by the neighbors' cattle before it was time to harvest, and our labor would be lost. We had a few acres of grass to cut, and this would be done by the kindness of our neighbors, who on a given day would come together and secure it for us, putting it in a stack on the ground where it grew, thirty or forty rods from the house. This stack, containing about three tons, was all we had for one horse and two cows through the winter. Some of this would be taken off by the wind, but more by the neighbors' cattle which would be constantly breaking over in spite of all we could do. Around this stack our cows and horse would stand without any shelter or covering. Before the winter was half gone, the stack would be so low that the snow would drift over it and cover it entirely, making it difficult for anyone to get at the hay, especially children of our ages; but we had to go, with stockings on our hands in place of mittens, and do the best we could. When we had got at the hay, we pulled with our hands what we thought a big pile, but not more than would be necessary for three sheep, but it was all our cows and horse would get for that night. Our stack would be gone long before the winter closed, but we got through by picking up a little here and there as best we could, but our cows and horse had little left but skin and bones.

In this way we passed two or three winters, when at last the old mare got so poor she could not get up without help, and just as grass began to grow in the Spring, she died from exposure and starvation. She was a great pet with us children, and we sincerely mourned her loss, and as I grew older and realized the loss, I felt the deepest regret and even to this day the recollection of it is quite painful.

Time moved on slowly until I was twelve or thirteen years of age, when I began to realize something of our situation, to see something of the wants of the family, and to assume some of its cares and responsibilities.

My mother was prudent and industrious, and she knew how to use the needle and could make garments, and she was employed by our neighbors for that purpose. She received two shillings a day for services, going out in the morning and returning late in the evening. Often I would go to accompany her home and to assist her bringing her bundles or a few quarts of meal or a peck of potatoes.

With such means as these it may well be supposed we were poor and needy, and often in need of the comforts of life. The wood for our fire I had to bring to the house in my arms though my sisters would often take hold and help me. For this way we could get along when the weather was dry and warm, but when the fall came on with cold winds and early snows, it was very bad. To rise in the morning and see the ground covered with snow and no wood to make a fire, and no clothing to keep me warm, and no shoes for my feet, but old worn out ones of my mother's—all these together made it so gloomy that I would almost give up in despair. But necessity forced me out, and when I was returning weary and cold and hungry, I would throw off my burden and sit down and weep, and say to myself, "O, if I had a father like the other boys to take care of me, to give me enough to eat and tell me what to do, then I would work willingly." But I had none and was doomed to suffer on some years longer in this way.

When winter set in, we must have help, and my uncle would send men and teams and in one day would leave a large pile at our door, as they had not far to haul it. My uncle would give me a pair of shoes, and sometimes a pair of boots which was a great luxury in those days. He was very kind to us all, and especially to me, for I was his favorite, and wherever he went I must go with him. In this way I was often led into scenes of dissipation, drunkenness and profanity from which I did not always escape the contaminating effects, and being thus early in life brought under such influences and practices, and having a natural taste for strong drink, it is a wonderful mercy that I have not long since filled a drunkard's grave. But it seems to have been the purpose of the Almighty that it should have had the contrary effect upon me. Witnessing as I did from my earliest youth the dreadful effects it would produce in families and individuals,

an impression was made on my mind which I could never forget; and these impressions and conviction were deepened and strengthened as I advanced into manhood, when I vowed eternal opposition to the traffic in ardent spirits.

Among the trials which fall to the lot of the widow is the settlement of the husband's estate. My mother had this to do. She was appointed administratrix and commenced the work. The estate was but little in debt and what accounts were presented were settled in some way with the exception of one.

This was a note of bond of \$34.47 purporting to be signed by my father. This was a great surprise to my mother and all her friends, and from various circumstances it appeared to be a forgery, and mother refused to pay it. It was presented by Behem Shepherd who kept a small store two or three miles south of us in the town of Georgia. The note was sued and brought before a justice court, to be holden at a public house near by Shepherd's. It created some stir in the neighborhood, and on the day of the trial quite a company had gathered at the tavern to see it go on.

Shepherd had not conducted himself so as to lift himself above suspicion, and it was evident that public opinion was on mother's side. There was something that caused delay, and the Court did not proceed at once to the consideration of the merits of the note, when one stepped up and said, "It is of no use for the widow to contend about the note. It is a just one. I saw Whittemore when he signed it." One of the bystanders who heard this said, "Why, Sam, the devil is in you; you were not in this part of the country at that time the note was dated. You had gone to Philadelphia with a drove of horses." This of course spoiled his story, and when the next day he was called upon the stand he swore to a very different story, but one as positive as to the signature of the note as the first. Some four or five witnesses were called in to prove what he had said the day before. Sam was agitated, looked pale and sweat profusely. The Court gave judgment against my mother and she appealed to County Court. Mother had no money, but she had friends who helped her to money which she had to advance to pay the jury fees, and she went to work to prepare for trial. She applied to a lawyer who had lately moved into the place by the name of Van Ness, and she was the first client he had in the town. He was a strong man and an eloquent pleader at the bar. The day of trial came on and mother was ready. Asa Aldis and Betes Turner appeared as Shepherd's attorneys. The case



was called and while examining some of the preliminary proceedings Van Ness found something not according to law. This he argued to the Court was sufficient grounds to stop further proceedings. The Court sustained the position, the cause was quashed, and the plaintiff could prick anew if he chose, but fearing, probably, what the consequences might be to some of his witnesses he let it end where it was. But the swearing of Sam before the justice court fixed the mark of perjury upon him, which he could never afterwards wipe off.

Having no further need of her lawyer, she called for his account, which he made out and sent to her, something over thirty dollars, and underneath he wrote, "The above account I make a present to the widow and her fatherless children, as I have not a heart to exact it of them." He was a gentleman.

He afterwards removed to Burlington, and received the honors of the State being elected Governor, and afterwards was sent as Minister to the Court of Spain.

About this time society began to settle down into something like order. A number of first-class families had settled in the village. A purer gospel began to be preached. Missionaries sent out from Massachusetts and Connecticut to labor in the northern parts of Vermont would spend some time in this place. They were strong men who did not shun to declare the whole counsel of God. They preached the vital doctrines of the Gospel, such as free grace, Total Depravity, Sovereignty of God, and the final perseverance of the Saints. Such preaching in those days was thought to be the life and soul of religion, and it left a strong and abiding impression on the minds of the people.

The Congregational Church was organized in St. Albans in 1803, and soon afterwards the Rev. Willard Preston of happy memory was settled over it as its pastor under whose ministration the church was strengthened and enlarged. Some of the leading men of the place were brought in who proved to be pillars in the church while they lived. My mother was a constant attendant at the meetings. Although she lived more than two miles away from the place of meeting, she was seldom absent. Prepared as she was with more regard to comfort than appearance, she would make her way on foot through storms of rain or storms of snow, through frost or mud, to the house of God, and I must go with her, and though unwillingly, I must go. We went alone, for none of our neighbors went to meeting and we had no company until we got half-way.

I thought it hard to be compelled to go to meeting every Sabbath, while it was a play day to the rest of the boys, but no argument could prevail, I must go. Sunday was a long day to me, and how anxiously I waited for the last amen. Two or three years passed off in this way, without much change in our situation, or circumstances, except as we grew older, and stronger, we could get along a little better. My oldest sister could work out and take care of herself. In the year 1812 the war was with England, and my uncle, probably under the excitement of liquor, enlisted as a soldier in the United States army for five years. He was stationed a while in Burlington, but was soon ordered to the western frontier. He was a man of rather frail constitution and poorly fitted for a soldier's life. He soon took sick and died in camp, and we saw him no more.

My eldest sister was married at the age of eighteen to Josiah Smith, who was about twenty-four. He was a cooper by trade, but he also carried on a small farm which he owned in the neighborhood. They went to housekeeping by themselves about a half mile from us, in the house now occupied by Mr. Mooney. Here they spent the winter. In the spring he proposed to build a house on one corner of our place if mother would give him the land. This was agreed to, and he moved into our house and occupied one part while we occupied what we called the shop.

I was now sixteen years of age, and was able and willing to work, but I needed some one to tell me what to do and how to do it, and my brother-in-law was just the man to do this. He was a man of great energy and perseverance in business, and from him I learned to work and to be industrious, and some of his business qualities became so strongly fixed in my mind that they have been of service to me ever since.

He had team and tools, and he would prepare my ground in the spring and furnish seed, and I would work for him in return. We now began to succeed. We raised some corn and all the potatoes we needed and some to sell.

Up to this time I wore old clothes, second-hand, such as had been cast off by other boys, but now I could furnish myself with new clothes, new shoes or new boots. These were luxuries indeed, which I could well appreciate.

My brother-in-law put up his house as proposed on one corner of our lot. One part he fitted up for his family, and the other part he used for a cooper's shop.

After my mother had visited her friends in the city she came home contented and had no more anxiety to return, but she had left her mother behind, and she had much anxiety on her account. She was old and infirm, and must be soon left upon others for support. She had letters from her often, in one of which she spoke of her loneliness and thought her case something like old Jacob's when he said, "Joseph is not and Simeon is not and ye have taken away Benjamin also." At length a letter came, but it was written by another, a grandchild, who had written to inform us that Grandmother had received a paralytic shock which had deprived her of the use of her limbs and also of speech, that she was in destitute circumstances, and unless her friends in the country could do something for her, she would be obliged to apply to the town authorities for help. This was indeed sad news for Mother and for us all. But something must be done at once, and what could we do? We had nothing to send to her, we could but just live as it was. The only view we could take of it which offered any chance was to go after her and bring her to our home. But we had no money. We had no horse. The way was long and the winter was cold, and snow was deep. These obstacles would have daunted anyone with a mind less resolute than my mother's. She went to work at once to see what could be done. My brother-in-law would furnish the horse, and a small sum of money was obtained in some way, but I do not remember how. These two wants supplied, the smaller ones were more readily obtained, and we were soon ready to depart. The next morning, the horse was harnessed to the old pung, and with one bag of provisions for ourselves, and another of grain for our horse we commenced again our journey to Boston. I was now seventeen years of age, and I felt that most of the responsibility rested upon me.

We proceeded on our journey without hindrance or delay and reached Medford in due time. We found Grandmother living with a stranger at the expense of the town. We found her as we had been informed almost in a helpless condition. We had no visiting to do as mother's two sisters had died since we were there before, and their families were broken up. Her brother-in-law was there who afforded us some assistance by way of counsel and advice. He suggested that as the town was liable for Grandmother's support, perhaps they would give us something if she were taken off their hands. He applied to the authorities who agreed if they could have a guarantee that she would not be sent back, they would do something.



Mother gave them this assurance, and they gave her, I think, about forty dollars. With this large amount we felt sure we could get home and have something left. My mother had a brother living in Lynn who came to Medford to see us, but in no condition to afford us any assistance or comfort, and as we were stopping at a public house on expense, it was necessary to hasten our preparations for home. A large trunk and a bed must be packed onto our pung in some way, and be lashed on with cords, and altogether we had a cumbersome load. In the morning our bill was settled and we started. Our progress was slow, but we reached home in safety having been preserved in our absence by the Power that can temper the wind to the shorn lamb.

As time advanced, every year seemed to add to my strength and to our comfort, and to open up brighter prospects for the future.

My brother Smith was a hard-working man, and he saw that I, too, could work, and he resolved to give me a chance to help myself.

A small farm of eighty acres which adjoined his own was for sale, and he proposed to buy it and take me in for a share, to which I readily consented.

He made the purchase, and was to pay one thousand bushels of corn in five years, two hundred each year. I went in for one fourth part, which was to be mine when I paid for it.

When the Spring opened, we went to work on our farm. I was now in my element and much elated with the prospect before me. We prepared our ground and planted largely. The season was fine and there was a fair prospect of an abundant harvest; there came a frost in August and destroyed our crop. So we failed to make our first payment in corn, and had to pay the money. Two or three seasons that followed were equally unfavorable for growing corn. Very little that was planted came to maturity, being cut off by early frost.

The year 1816 will long be remembered as the cold season in which was the greatest scarcity of bread ever known in Vermont.

Our obligations for the land were given for so much corn, but corn could not be bought for three dollars per bushel. We compromised with our creditor for one dollar per bushel and paid him cash in place of corn.

We now began to feel comparatively comfortable. Many of our wants had been supplied, but our house was open and cold and unpleasant and not worth repairing and we were not able to build a new one. While we were thinking of this matter, my brother-in-law

made us an offer. He would let us have one-half of his house, the part he used for a shop for one hundred and fifty dollars, and take our house for twenty-five dollars, and fifty dollars he would allow me for a pair of steers I had raised to be three years old, and would wait for the balance till I could earn it. This was agreed to, and I gave him my note for the balance payable in three years, twenty-five dollars a year with interest. That part of the house had not been furnished inside, and it could be of no use to us as it was. So we went to work the next two or three months, getting material together, picking up a little here and there, and when we were ready we set a man to work, who with one or two hands with him, soon had it ready for the mason, and the mason soon had it ready for us. We moved in sometime in October, bidding adieu to the old place and all its painful associations. We began at once setting up beds, arranging furniture, and putting our house in order, and then sat down to enjoy the contrast.

A bright fire was blazing on the hearth, and shone out upon the floor, white and smooth, upon new plastered walls and broad well-lighted windows. All which taken together afforded a sensation of pleasure, I could not describe. I walked the floor with emotions of pleasure I was almost ashamed to acknowledge, yet could not suppress. I was pleased to see my mother contented, my grandmother comfortable, and my sisters with a home they were not ashamed of.

I had now entered upon a new era. We had risen from abject want to competence and comfort. The whole face of nature had changed its shady aspects for one more clear and pleasant, and we were well prepared to enjoy it.

I had now reached the period when every object around me was pleasant and some quite interesting.

About this time our home circle was broken again by the marriage of my sister, Polly to Amos Clark. She left us for her new home, not far away, yet we felt quite lonely as we saw her vacant place, but it seemed to unite me more closely to the one sister remaining. She was just advancing into young womanhood, and some thought her quite handsome. I was indeed quite fond of her. She was my companion at home or abroad, in the house or by the way.

My grandmother sunk gradually under the disease with which she was first attacked, and the infirmities of age, until she was entirely helpless. She must be lifted from her bed to her chair and from the chair to the bed, and required constant attention.

As mother's business called her much from home, this burden fell heavily upon my sister, by which it was feared her constitution was injured. My grandmother was removed from her earthly troubles to a world of rest, for which we hoped she was prepared. She died at the age of seventy-six.

I was now in the springtime of life, and my season of youth was passing away. I was enjoying my full share of its pleasures, and enough of its cares and disappointments, to prove true the saying that youth is not the happiest period of human life. Its pursuits were much like the child's in the chase of the butterfly, which it seldom overtakes, and if it should, its beauty is marred at the slightest touch. I began to realize the truth of that saying of Solomon's when he declared that all is vanity and vexation of spirit, and surely if he who had every means of gratification had failed, who after could hope to succeed?

I thus learned to moderate my desires, and to appreciate more the blessings I had and my obligations to the giver and more serious thoughts began to occupy my mind. About this time events were transpiring which went far to shape my destiny for this life and perhaps for the next.

A young lady came into the neighborhood from an adjoining town, to spend the summer. She was thought to be quite an acquisition to our society of young people. Possessed of a well-balanced mind and a fair exterior, she attracted the attention of all, and won the admiration of many. I soon formed an interesting acquaintance with her, and I dared not hope for anything more. With all her advantages, I felt there could be but little chance for me, and I resolved that however much I might feel, she, nor no other one should know it, but I would watch her closely for any token of special regard, and fortunately I sometimes thought the balance of evidence preponderated in my favor.

The summer glided away, and she having fulfilled her engagement returned to her home in Fairfax, just upon the border of the town and not far away, and we saw her no more, until the early part of the winter, when someone made a proposition to visit Miss Kingsbury, which was responded to by a number, and I was in favor of the movement. Accordingly a big sleigh was provided and packed with merry riders, and we soon reached our destination. We had a merry time for a few hours, and when about to return Miss K. was urged to go with us. She was willing to go, but how could she get home again? To remove that objection, I promised to take her home.



When we came to pack into the sleigh, we found we had more riders than seats; consequently, some of us must sit double. I had heard there was such a thing as a pleasant burden, but I never knew what it was till that night.

Miss K. spent a number of days in the neighborhood, much to the gratification of our young people, and when she wished to go home, I was ready and willing to fulfill my promise, for it would afford me the opportunity I had so long wished for, and on the way I made a full disclosure of my feelings. I frankly and without hesitation or reserve laid my whole soul before her. I assured her it was not the impulse of the moment, but almost a year of impatient waiting should evince the genuineness of my affection for her. I told her I was in her power and how she could make me miserable or happy. And now what are you going to say to me! She hesitated a moment but at length replied with becoming modesty and caution, yet with the frankness and candor which was characteristic of her—"I suppose I have become well acquainted with you, and I have no doubt as to the sincerity of your professions. I have known for a long time your partiality for me, notwithstanding your attempts to conceal it. You have done yourself injustice by the long delay, but as my decision is attended with such fatal consequences I must ask for a little time for consideration." "When will you let me know?" I asked. "The next time you call," she answered. "Will you name the time?" I asked. She said, "I shall leave that with you."

I met her at the appointed time and found her alone, the rest of the family had gone out to attend evening meeting. With regard to that interview it is only necessary to say, that the great question of my life was settled, that confidence was established which was never doubted on either side, and that union was formed which lasted until it was broken by death.

I must leave here this interesting subject, but must say that in reviewing those events recollections are awakened almost as vivid as reality itself.

I was now about twenty-one years of age, and I will record something of my religious experience.

From my early training I had learned to respect religion, and to acknowledge its importance, and resolved at some future time to give it my serious consideration.

There were but two denominations in the place at this time, namely, Congregational and Methodist; the latter was the most

popular at this time. They had a large congregation made up mostly of the young people of the place, myself among the rest. There was no disagreement between them, except what grew out of their difference in views upon Doctrinal belief.

The strong Calvinistic doctrines set forth in one church were strongly condemned in the other—in fact, had become a subject of common remark through the town. It was alleged the doctrines preached in the Calvinistic church as it was called, involved the following absurdities: “You can and you can’t, you shall and you shan’t”; “You will be damned if you do, and you will be damned if you don’t.”

This, of course, I could not believe to be true of any people of common sense, and it would be but fair to hear before I judged. I resolved to hear for myself and give the subject a patient hearing for six weeks to come. Accordingly, I went the next Sunday to that meeting. There I found a congregation sober, thoughtful, and devout. The subject was the great salvation, so abundant and so free. “Yes,” said he, “as free as the water that runs down your streets.” None could have held it forth more inviting to the sinner, or urged it any stronger upon his acceptance.

Of course, there could be no objection to such preaching, for it was the sentiment taught and believed by all Christians. Hence, it remained to be seen what the objectionable doctrines were. The preacher continued, I think, the subject of Free Grace through the second Sunday, but on the third we had something new and startling. He rose and announced his text and said, “From this text I propose to give a brief exposition of the doctrine of Total Moral Depravity.”

He divided his subject and laid out his plan, and every position was strengthened by the word of God, abundantly quoted. He showed that the sinner by the Fall had lost all moral power of being good or doing good, that every action was done through selfishness, and not to the Glory of God. Consequently, it could not be acceptable in His sight. Salvation was offered freely without money and without price. But he has no heart to accept. No matter how rich the feast, or how strong the invitation. He will be ready with his excuses. No entreaty will avail, though Christ himself should stand at the door and knock, till his head was wet with the dew and his locks with the drops of the night. No admittance will be granted.

The preacher showed clearly that the same disposition that would

reject Christ today would reject him tomorrow, and next day and next year and so on to the end of life.

This was presenting the subject in a new light. It was unwelcome doctrine, but it seemed to be clearly taught in the Bible, and was in accordance with my own experience and observation, and I began to feel a little uneasy. I felt there could be no safety in putting off this matter to a more convenient season, that season would never come, or it may have passed already.

I began to feel how vain and foolish were all my notions, that I had Christ and religion at command. That I had only to offer myself, and I should be accepted of course. This now appeared to be an insult to Christ, and I trembled at my presumption. I was surprised at my ignorance, and I began to feel that I was in a lost condition without God and without hope and I knew not which way to turn. In this frame of mind I attended a meeting when I heard the doctrine of Sovereignty of God and Divine Purposes clearly set forth and explained. It was shown in the Councils of Eternity, when the Covenant of Redemption was made and the plan of Salvation was formed, Christ had promised a seed to serve Him; that he should see the travail of his soul and be satisfied. That there would be gathered from this fallen race a great company which no man could number and be given to Him as a reward for his sufferings. This great company would be born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." They were created anew in Christ Jesus by the same Almighty Power that raised Christ from the dead. A power that in its mysterious operations upon the mind would in no sense affect the freedom of the will, for it is written, "My people shall be willing in the day of my power."

This subject was continued for several Sabbaths, the Preacher showing most conclusively that it was one of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel and that it was brought to view, directly or indirectly, on almost every page of the Bible. I listened at first with amusement, with wonder and then with satisfaction. I was happy in the thought that there was a Power that could save, and in the language of a sinking Peter I cried out, "Lord save or I perish." I soon had peace and joy in believing. Those doctrines were humbling to the sinner but honorable to God and I loved them, and I loved the man that had so faithfully presented them, and it is with pleasure that I here record the name of Rev. Henry Strong, as the instrument of God in leading me into the knowledge of the truth which made a

deep impression at the time-and has ever since been my consolation and my hope, and I trust they will be the theme of my rejoicing in the kingdom of God for ever. For with the Apostle I am persuaded that he who has begun a good work will carry it on to the final day. That all who are born again will be kept by the Almighty Power of God through faith unto Salvation.

The doctrine of the Saints, Perseverance to eternal life, is the crowning doctrine of the whole system of Salvation. I must leave this subject here and proceed on unless I make my story too long.

June was passing on. Two or three years had passed and nothing remarkable had occurred. I continued to work on the farm with my brother-in-law Smith, but I felt cramped and thought I should like to shove out into deeper water and steer my own boat. I sold my interest in the farm to Smith and took the other part of the house where we lived in payment. This gave us a comfortable house and with the nine acres of land free from debt we began to feel quite independent. We had but little, but we knew well how to appreciate it and were quite happy. This new arrangement brought me into circumstances where that union could be consummated which had happily been formed nearly three years before.

Such a proposition was made and the consent of all concerned was obtained, and I was married to Miss Aluna Kingsbury on the first day of November in the year 1819. I brought her to her new home and we commenced our journey of life together, which unfortunately for me proved too short.

We soon conceived the idea of building an addition to our house. The plan was formed and though we had little to do with, we set about it at once. The first thing was to dig a well, so as to have it within the enclosure of the new building we proposed to erect. I had it dug and stoned and it furnished us a good supply of water, a convenience we could well appreciate, as it had not before been provided.

During the following winter, materials were collected and in the Spring we commenced work on the addition, and were not long in having it finished and ready for use. This gave us two bedrooms, a pantry and well-room, which was a great convenience to both families and we were all very much pleased.

A year passed pleasantly away. I worked upon our small place, and took some land on shares, but I felt I must have a wider range and sighed for a farm.

There were farms to be sold, but I had not the means to pay.



While in this uneasy state, my father-in-law came to see us and proposed to sell to me and one of his sons as a part of it, upon such terms as would make it easy for us to pay.

This was quite unexpected and not what we could have desired, yet after much consideration we closed a trade. We moved about the first of July, and took a room in the house with the family and commenced our labors together by cutting the grass and securing the hay. After the haying was over, I went to work they said like a tiger, cleaning away old hedges, chopping bushes, mowing briers, and turning over the sod. After a while we began to think we had made a mistake, that our present arrangement could not result to the benefit of either party, and after a consultation a proposition was made and accepted, the papers given up, and the company dissolved without in the least disturbing the good feeling and harmony of the family. Thus I was again afloat, not knowing what I should do or where next to land.

But I had learned, I hope, to trust that Providence for the future which had so happily guided me in the past. I had not long to wait, for as soon as it was known that I was looking for a farm the Rev. Mr. Strong came to see me, and proposed to sell me his hill farm, so-called. He set forth the qualities of his farm, both present and prospective, in glowing terms, and wished I would go and see it and offered to go with me any time I would say.

I told him I would go the next morning. The farm was in low repute. Several families had tried to live on it, but had to leave to save their lives, and I thought but little of it—in fact, had a strong prejudice against it. The next day according to the arrangement we went to see it. It contained one hundred acres situated on the side hill one and one-fourth miles east of St. Albans village on the road leading to Fairfield. There was a house and barn on the place; the house was new, but the barn was old and in a dilapidated state. There was ten or twelve acres improved and about as much land had been haggled over and grown up to briers and bushes. The lot was once covered with a heavy growth of timber, which had blown down some fifteen or twenty years before by a heavy wind which had swept down about every tree on the lot, and they were lying in a decomposed state, but the land was covered with a second growth of timber almost as heavy as the first. The soil was deep and rich and only needed to be worked to make it productive.

Having thus taken a partial look at it, Mr. Strong inquired what

I thought of it. I told him I thought better of it than before I saw it, and he might give me the best terms and I would think of it. The price he said would be eleven hundred dollars, and he would put it in yearly payments, and take horses for pay. "It will be necessary for me to know soon, as I expect to leave the place on Monday next, and all my business must be closed before I go."

This would give me but two days in which to make up my mind, and being a matter of great importance to me and my family, I was not a little embarrassed to know what to do, or who to advise with, knowing the prejudice which existed against the farm and also against the man who owned it. There was no one whose opinion I could trust, but feeling I must have advice from some one, I called on my brother-in-law Smith, and told him what I had in view. He said at once, "Don't go on that hill to live." I told him I wanted him to see the place, then he could tell better what to do. Accordingly we were on the ground the next morning in good season. We looked it over very close and careful, and when through I said, "Now tell me what to do." He replied, "You ought to have it for a less sum, but perhaps you could not do better than to take it," and so I thought.

The next day the farm was bought. I gave my notes for \$1100, payable two hundred dollars yearly in good likely horses, of the value of seventy dollars and no less each, took a deed, and gave back a mortgage of the same, and the farm was bought.

The deed is dated Oct. 6th, 1821. I now felt a new era in my life had taken place, and I went to work to shape affairs to suit the new circumstances. As the family needed the room where we lived, we moved into the old log house, which stood near by, and spent the winter there, doing but little except taking care of the cattle, and chopping my fire wood.

Sometime during the winter, my sister Eliza was married to Mr. John French to whom I sold out my interest in the old homestead, and took a melancholy farewell of the scenes of my childhood and youth.

The winter passed rather slowly, but on the 18th of March 1822, my little effects were collected, rather meagre in appearance, yet I was rich in the treasure I possessed in my wife and little son, then a little more than a year old. We started off and soon found ourselves in our new home on the hill. There was no snow except around the fences, and in old drifts. Still it looked rather dreary, everything was out of shape. No convenience within or without. But we had made

up our minds for the worst and were not disappointed, but with willing hands and cheerful hearts we set to work, and soon had things in order and began to feel quite at home.

I was now fairly launched on the sea of life and whether I should sink or swim remained to be seen. There were many obstacles in the way of success. The farm was rough and uncultivated with a soil that would yield to nothing but the hardest labor. I had no sympathy from without. All prophesied that I should fail and many hoped that I should. Mr. Strong was not popular in the town and even in the church he had many enemies. They charged him with being too much engrossed with the business of the world and too exacting in trade, and something over-reaching, and to prove this they would cite the trade he had made with me. Hence no doubt, several secretly hoped I should fail, that thereby it would prove their charges true. Under these circumstances my trade was much talked about—in fact, was a subject of general remark through the town, and I could hear nothing but taunts and jeers from all quarters. This being the case, I felt my energies of body and mind stirred to the very bottom, and I resolved the Lord helping me I would make them change their tune. I felt there was a power within me that was equal to the undertaking. But in the house was the anchor of hope. There was the desire of my eyes, and the joy of my heart. There was a wise counselor. There was a countenance ever radiant with smiles. There was a faith that could brush away the thickest gloom and let in the sunshine of hope in the darkest times.

My capital was small at the commencement. I had a yoke of oxen, three cows and six sheep, no cart, no waggon, a sled had to be used both summer and winter. I had two or three hundred dollars in obligations payable at some future day in cattle or grain. I had an iron constitution and a determined will. With these means I began work on the farm. The barn, as I have said before, was in a dilapidated state. Some of the boards were torn off at the end, and the timbers were much rotted, and some entirely gone. I went to work to repair it and soon it had a new appearance, and in fact it changed the aspect of the entire place. I repaired fences. There were nooks and corners which were covered with briars and thistles, left to grow through carelessness or neglect. I went at such places with my oxen and plow, and soon had them subdued and fit for the seed. These little things gave a new appearance to the place, and in fact was working out a contrast which was noticed before long by

those passing by. I put in about an acre of wheat, planted one and one-half to corn, and a fair proportion to potatoes. My spring's work being light, I soon had it done, and now I could turn my attention to the main object I had in view, viz.: clearing off my land and raising grain. Upon the result of this enterprise depended my success or failure. There were enough to predict what the result would be. What chance could there be of raising grain on that farm, which had never grown enough to supply one family with bread through the winter? But I resolved to try, and I went to work single-handed and alone except as I hired some by the day, as I had opportunity and found means to pay. It is with no desire to boast that I say I probably did the work of two men every day. In this way I found after four or five weeks, I had laid down five or six acres, and now only waited with anxiety for the day to come when the fire would be applied. This was delayed by frequent rains until about the second week in August. On the tenth it was probably in fine order for the fire, but I was away from home, helping Uncle Amos finish his haying. The day was fine, and I was very uneasy lest the chance might slip, but the weather was fair and looked likely to be dry for several days to come, and I ventured to stay over night, as he needed me for the next day. I will not say what my feelings were when I awoke in the night and found it raining. The favorable opportunity came and I had let it slip, and it would probably be a long time before another so favorable would come, and as everything depended upon the success of the fire, I waited impatiently for the time to come. In the last days of August it began to dry and the first day of September the fire was set. It was a fairly good burn, but not so good as I desired, as it would require much labor to fit it for the seed. I procured what help I could and in about twenty days had the seed in the ground, and as it was "sowed upon good ground it soon sprung up."

I cannot describe the sensation of pleasure which I felt when I saw the rich blades of wheat, as the fruits of my labor where a few weeks before the timber was growing. It grew finely, and soon covered the ground, and bid fair for a good crop, but still it was not sure, but it might be killed by the frost of winter, and I waited anxiously for spring to open. At length the snow disappeared, and it was found to be somewhat injured by the frost. Still the crop was a fair one and did me much good as it settled the question that wheat be grown on the hill. My faith and hope was much strengthened, and I trust I was not altogether unmindful of my obligations to that



unseen hand which had bestowed the blessing. Relying upon the same kind Providence I resolved to go it strong another year.

The year came round and I was fortunate in obtaining help. A young Frenchman who came from Canada called upon me who was seeking employment, and I employed him for eight months and he proved to be a great worker, and just the man I wanted, and when the season came for chopping about the first of June we were ready to strike. In three or four weeks we had six or seven acres laid down and waiting for the fire, and we had not long to wait. There was no rain, the weather was warm and the brush was soon dry, and at a favorable time, the fire was set. The wind was strong and the flames spread rapidly over the entire place, sweeping every thing before it, leaving but little comparatively to fit it for the seed. After the hay and grain were gathered in about the first of September, I began clearing off the new piece.

I was now in the prime of life, in full vigor and strength. Work throughout the longest day could not tire me, and my man was pretty near an equal. The way the logs and polls and brush went off was quite a wonder even to me. The weather was fair and dry and the wind and fire of great service. In about twelve days we had the piece cleared and the seed sowed and growing. The next thing to be done was the piece cleared the year before, and from which we had taken the crop of wheat must be sowed to rye. Two or three teams were employed and on the 16th of September we finished the job. That day a little girl came to our house, and we took her in and as she needed friends we kept her.

And now as I accomplished my object, and had done a great work, as I thought in a short time, I would allow myself a day of rest, and throwing off all cares and anxieties I would try to feel my obligations to that kind Providence which had always guided me, and which was so plainly seen in recent events.

Thus far I had succeeded and my prospects for the future began to brighten. I had now about twelve acres sowed to grain which soon sprung up and covered the ground, and at the setting in of winter looked fine, and if it could escape the frost I should be quite sure of a good crop. The winter was favorable. The early snows that fell remained on the ground until spring. When it went off, the grain was found to be flush and green. The growth was luxurious, convincing at once of the strength of the soil, and that I had not misjudged with regard to the quality of the land. When at length it

put on the harvest hue, it was seen from afar, and was generally known where it was and who was the owner. But the clamor was hushed. Not a dog to move his tongue. All were surprised, some pleased with my success and willing to acknowledge they were mistaken in the farm. But the most part fell back into sullen silence, having nothing to say. I felt that I had conquered, though the victory was not complete. A few outposts had not yet surrendered, but the front ranks were broken and the final triumphs at hand.

In taking a retrospect of the past events of my life, many recollections are awakened which are interesting to me, and I would like to record them, but this would make my story too long, and I must content myself with sketching some of the general results.

After taking the second crop from the land, it was laid down to grass and I had abundance of hay, and I needed another barn, and the materials must be provided the coming winter. In getting out the timber in the swamp I worked all day with my boots full of water. I took cold, which brought on a fever, which confined me about three months. I was taken the first of March, and it was June before I was out, but the barn was finished and filled with hay that summer.

My stock had now increased to twenty or twenty-five head of cattle, and about thirty sheep, and I could enlarge to any number that I could keep through the winter. The summering would cost nothing, as they would run down the commons which joined me on all sides. The notes given for my farm, as I have before said were given for horses which I could buy for grain almost at my own terms which was a fixed price for grain, and the price for horses was to be whatever the owners and the person holding my note could agree upon. I would take no responsibility in regard to the horses. This precaution I found saved me much trouble.

I have now come to the third summer I had spent on the hill, and had already taken up two notes given for the farm. Another would be due in October coming, and I was prepared to meet it. A little good fortune which I had this season I must not pass unnoticed. I had a piece of land, some three or four acres, which had been haggled over and left to grow up to briars and thistles which I cleared off the fall before. In the spring I broke it up and planted it to potatoes. The crop was abundant, yielding something over twelve hundred bushels. About this time the communication to New York was opened through the canal, and potatoes could be taken to that market.

A gentleman in the village by the name of Taylor, Jack Taylor he was called, proposed to buy all I wished to sell. He would give me twenty-five cents per bushel delivered at the Lake, and pay me in horses that would answer on my note. The bargain was made, and I delivered him six hundred bushels for which he paid me \$150, which he saw endorsed on my note. This unexpected help put me ahead one year in advance and made me quite easy as to what remained due.

There was but little fence on the farm when I commenced, and what I made was of material that would not last long, and there was no soil timber growing on the farm, and a good fence I thought to be important. There was cedar timber in what was called Fairfield swamp, some three or four miles away, a narrow strip of land bordering on the creek and claimed by every man who joined it; probably no one had any legal title to it. Hence, there was some scrambling for the timber. I bought of the man whose claim I thought to be as good and a little better than any other all I could get off while it lasted. I thought this a great chance, and one I thought would never occur again, and I resolved to improve it. This was my business for several winters and my farm was well stocked. I boasted that my farm was the best fenced in town. It is now more than forty years since those rails were put up, and they are still sound, and will remain so long after I am gone.

This may seem like noticing trifles, but there are associations connected with them that are strongly impressed upon my mind, and I would fondly hope that my friends should hereafter be passing by would please notice them and then remember me and call to mind that interesting period of my life.

Time had passed on and I had nearly paid for my farm. A balance of seventy-five dollars was due on the last note, and was held by some one in the village, I think it was Dr. Hall. This I paid in cash and the farm was mine. It was evening when I was going home, and I took the liberty to act just as I pleased and the action corresponded with the inward joy. I was glad the darkness hid me from observation. I was happy to feel that my wife who had been one with me in all our labors and anxieties could also be one with me in the enjoyment of it. The happy day had come when we could say we had a home, and were out of debt. They were all earned joys, and afforded a height of pleasure, unknown to a monarch on his throne.



We now began to feel that we could supply ourselves with some of the comforts of life. The first thing needed was a horse, and I soon found where one could be had, and I bought it for sixty-five dollars to be paid for in grain the coming winter. I took it home and turned it loose into a small enclosure near the house. Next morning the horse was gone. I searched for about a week and finally concluded the horse was stolen and gave it up. At last the horse was found about a half mile from home. In attempting to cross a small stream in a swamp, it got stuck in the mud and there died. This was quite a disappointment to us. But as we had been so highly favored by Providence, heretofore we felt no disposition to complain.

However, in the process of time we were the owners of a horse, and comfortable vehicles to ride in, and began to feel quite independent, and in fact we had but few wants we were unable to supply. I had now cleared off nearly all the farm and laid it down to grass, and I could now keep a large stock of cattle through the winter. The summering as I have said, would cost nothing as they could run on the common that lay adjoining us. How long I could have this chance was uncertain, as the land was for sale, and offered cheap, and as delays are dangerous, I bought it, about sixty-five acres paying about six dollars per acre. And when I had this paid for, there was yet another lot for sale adjoining on the other side, containing ninety-five acres, and mostly covered with timber, and a chance for making sugar, and it was just what I wanted to make me complete.

I accidentally heard it was for sale, and lost no time in finding the owner, and got the terms, which was five dollars per acre, put in three yearly payments. In less than five minutes the bargain was closed. The next day the writings were made out, I received my deed, and gave my notes, and before they were due they were paid and taken up.

I now had altogether something over two hundred and fifty acres of land, lying on the top of the hill, and extending from north to south something over one mile, and it was appropriately called the backbone of St. Albans.

We had now been about fourteen years on the hill, and the time had come which we had been looking for when we could leave the hill for some place more convenient to society and schools. Such a place was soon found, and the events connected with this movement were so plainly guided by the hand of Providence that I feel unwilling to pass them unnoticed.

It so happened one evening that I was in the village in one of the stores and Mr. Benjamin Swift was there talking with another man about his farm, and I heard him say he would sell his Holt farm if he had a chance. The thought struck me at once. When he left I followed him and when we were out of sight and hearing, I spoke to him and he stopped. I asked him if he would sell his Holt Farm to me. "Yes, if you want to buy it." I told him I would like to see it. "Well," said he, "come down tomorrow morning and I will go with you and look it over. It will be necessary for you to make up your mind soon as I shall leave Monday morning for Washington." I told him I would meet him at nine o'clock next morning. Accordingly, I met him next morning, but his business prevented him from going with me, but said he, "You get into my sleigh and drive over and see it," and so I did.

As it was covered with snow I could see but little of it, but Mr. Holt, the former owner, was yet on the place. I went into the house to talk with him. I told him I had come to look at the farm with a view to buying it. Said he, "There is a man here now for the same purpose; in fact they were then at the door ready to come in." I hardly knew what to do, but I said to Mr. Holt, "What do you say of the farm?" "I say," said he, "for stock there is none better." I bade him good morning and left. I said but little to the men at the door, but thought if they bought the farm they would have to see Mr. Swift before I could. It did not take me long to drive back to the village. I told Mr. Swift the facts in the case, that I had found a man there looking at the farm, and who it was; that he knew him to be a good and responsible man, and if he was under any obligations to him I would not interfere. He said he was not in the least, and if I wanted the place I could have it. The papers were made out at once. He gave me a deed, and I gave him back a mortgage and my obligations for \$3000, five hundred each year.

This business over I began to look with surprise at the step I had taken. I had in a few hours only been hurried on by force of circumstances to buy a farm I knew but little of except by reputation and involved myself and family in a debt of three thousand dollars, and I was almost afraid to go home, not knowing how I would be received there. Fortunately, my wife approved of what I had done, and I felt relieved.

As subsequent events unfolded it was quite certain that if I had not secured the farm at the time I did, I should never have owned it.

It was about the first of December when the farm was bought, and we had the winter before us to lay our plans and indulge in many speculations as to our future success.

But ere long our attention was called in another direction. My wife began to feel that she was not well, that the cold weather affected her more than usual. She would be chilled through at the least exposure, but we hoped with a little more prudence and better care with the coming in of warm weather in the spring she would be well again. Time passed on and she was no better, was evidently losing ground, and I felt we must have some counsel. Accordingly, about the first of March the Doctor was called (Dr. Chandler). He seated himself by her side; in a moment he looked up to me and round upon the children, evidently impressed by the discovery he had made. When the fearful truth flashed upon my mind, at once I was brought down from that mound of pleasure, I was then enjoying and which I was never afterwards to taste again.

His first order was to wean the child, and he proposed a course of treatment which would reduce the patient as offering the best chance for success. Accordingly, he gave her an emetic which prostrated her upon a sick bed from which she was never to recover. Thus I was left with five children, on my hands, the youngest one and a half years old, with no one to see to the affairs of the house. I was in deep trouble; in fact it was the saddest day of my life. I knew not which way to turn, but something must be done at once. A house-keeper must be had. Fortunately, one was readily found who was well adapted to fill the place. Mild and gentle in disposition, with a good motherly experience, she proved a great blessing to us all, and she will ever be remembered by us all with the most grateful recollections.

And now what could be done to serve my wife and the mother of my children. Alas! it was too evident what the result would be. Still a life so precious and one so much needed it was hard to give up, and we tried to save it, but the disease moved on unchecked and was doing its fearful work. And now what should I do with the farm I had bought? To go on without her seemed quite impossible, and I must give it up.

When I ventured to suggest such a thought to her, she said, "No, go on, you say the farm is all right, and one you have been wishing to find, and if I am not to live, I should choose to leave you there rather



than here on this hill." I could say no more; I must go on and wait the result.

It was now about the first of May. The spring season had come, and we began to make preparations to move to our new home. Some of our effects were sent on, but on the fifth of May I was ready to take my sick wife. She was quite feeble, just able to walk to the carriage. When seated she turned round to take a final look at the old home, where fourteen years of our young lives had been spent, and to which were connected interesting associations and pleasant memories and which she was never to see again.

She was pleased with her new home and would often express the hope that she would live to enjoy it. This hope she held to while no other one could see the least ground for hope. She thought to ride would help her, and she proposed to visit her sister, distant about one hundred and fifty miles in the south part of the state. The doctor did not object, but rather advised to go; at the same time he said he had no more hope of recovery than if she were then dead. I thought he had advised a foolish thing.

However, as she was anxious to go, and feeling willing to gratify her in everything she could ask, I consented to go, feeling almost sure that when she had gone one or two days journey she would think best to return, but when I ventured to suggest such a thing she would say, "No, no, keep on I can stand it." And we kept on, feeling that every day would be the last. At length we reached our journey's end, having been fourteen days on the road. The meeting afforded but little pleasure on either side. Friends would look at her with astonishment to see how feeble she was and apparently so near the end, with sadness depicted on their countenances and would turn away to conceal their emotions.

The experiment had been tried and she was satisfied. The next day she said, "I am ready to go home any time you say." Our relatives in the vicinity were notified that we were there, and they came in just to say farewell and retire, and on the morning of the third day after our arrival, we were ready to start for home.

The hour was too big with emotions to find utterance in words, and we parted almost in silence, feeling certain we should never meet again on earth. To reach home now was the great point of interest. The excitement seemed to give her new strength, and we proceeded on as rapidly as was prudent, and on the fourth day after we left we arrived home in safety, and we trust we were not unmindful of our

obligations to that unseen Power and Wisdom which can "temper the wind to the shorn lamb."

The decline was now rapid, until death ensued, which took place at four o'clock, Sabbath morning, August 14th, 1836.

Thus closed a life of thirty-nine years, without blemish. It was short but long enough to develop a character from which nothing need be taken, nor could anything be added to make it more perfect. She was possessed of all the qualities that could please the eye, or gratify the heart, and when the end came, her work was all done, and she was all ready, enjoying the presence of her Savior and with the full assurance of hope that she would enjoy Him forever in his heavenly Kingdom. There I hope to meet her and again throw my arms around her and press her to my bosom.

February 5th, 1876. Today completes my eightieth year. The day is bright and clear, and all without is calm and serene, corresponding to the mind within. I am in health and in the enjoyment of nearly all the faculties of forty years ago. As this is rather unusual at this period of life, I felt it would not be out of place to record it here, before passing on with my narrative, feeling that probably hereafter it may be read by some of my descendants with wonder and surprise.

Having brought down my narrative within the recollection of my family and friends, it will not be necessary to continue it much further. Our household affairs moved on without much interruption being favored with the services of a good housekeeper, who I have before mentioned and one who took a motherly care of my children. Her maiden name was Eliza Mason, but she was known to us as Mrs. Howe, who afterwards became the wife of Walter Buck of Brookfield, Vermont, where she now resides. I feel that this is but a compliment justly due, and it is with pleasure that I here record it to her memory.

The big debt for my farm still lay heavily on my hands. A misfortune which happened in my family interrupted my business, and caused some delay in making my payments, but after several years of hard labor, and the strictest economy it was paid for and the farm was mine. I swung the farm and my hat too.

June in passing always brings changes in families and it had done so in mine. Mrs. Howe was no longer with us, but we were fortunate in obtaining another, who remained with us several years. Her name was Phebe Wood and by her good conduct and faithfulness in

our services merited our warmest regards, and it is with pleasure that we now pay this tribute to her memory.

My two oldest children married. My daughter, Cordelia, to Mr. Lucius Hulburt of Lawrenceville, New York, and left for her new home, putting a hundred miles of distance between us. My son, Rodney, married Miss Maria West, our nearest neighbor. She came at once to live with us, as one family, where she remained for over thirty years, or until the time of her death. During this long period she was the leading spirit of the family. She labored hard. Alas! too hard to promote the common interest. She was ever ready to sacrifice herself for the good of others. For the poor she had a heart to feel, and a hand to bestow, and in the final distribution of her personal effects, they were not forgotten. She was a devoted wife and the kindest of mothers. She was attacked by a disease called pneumonia, which seized at once upon the vital organs, and could not be removed. It was a short work, only a few days, and she was gone, and we were left to mourn her loss, which was gain to her, being dismissed from the toils and cares of this life, to enter into that rest which is reserved in Heaven for the people of God forever.

There is yet another circumstance in my history I must not omit to mention though it affords me no pleasure to record it, and it will probably be to my family and friends a sad reminder of the unhappy event.

With no desire to do injustice to any one, so a few words must suffice. I allude to my second wife. My first I regarded as a God-given blessing, and as such I enjoyed it, and I trust I was ever thankful to Him. My second was given for a scourge, and I was equally thankful when He saw fit to remove it.

I have thus far been speaking of past events. I desire now in closing to speak of the present. With the Psalmist I can say that "goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life."

I have accomplished all my purposes and have attained the highest point of my ambition. I desire nothing more that earth can give. My health is good, and I have but few of the infirmities common to age.

We are a happy family, harmonious in all our relations. One has been added to fill the place that death made vacant, but the newly formed relation has not disturbed the harmony of the family, but has added to our comfort and pleasure.

There is one other in our family, I must not forget to mention.



A granddaughter who was the child of my youngest daughter, who when dying resigned to our charge a babe of four months old. She is now nearly seventeen years old and is still the object of our care.

I have two daughters spared to me yet, who guide the affairs of my house and I trust will smooth my declining years, and soothe my passage to the close of life.

# JAMES DUANE OF NEW YORK

## A REVIEW

By JOHN CLEMENT

A REVOLUTIONARY CONSERVATIVE: JAMES DUANE OF NEW YORK.  
By EDWARD P. ALEXANDER. Foreword, xviii pp.; 283 pp. New  
York. Columbia University Press. 1938. \$3.00.

"I hope God has given me a conciliatory Talent," said James Duane. To the writer of the foreword to this biography, to Dr. Dixon Ryan Fox, and to the author, conciliatory talent, which the author defines as "skill at intrigue," was one of Duane's major characteristics. And it so appears, in almost all phases of his career, except in his handling for New York, during a long period, of the New Hampshire Grants controversy. There it was almost utterly lacking.

Due to this human inconsistency, Duane may be counted one of the Founders of Vermont; for his attitude and actions, as we are now given an opportunity to observe them, made the independence of Vermont inevitable. The policy of New York, under his leadership, if it had been conciliatory, along the lines of British instructions, could have avoided the controversy; and thus it could have brought the New Hampshire Grants within the limits of New York, permanently. Vermonters thus have reason to be grateful to James Duane.

Duane himself, if he could observe the present, might wish that he could have annexed northern New York to Vermont. He might not, now, be as astonished as he would have been then, to find Vermont grateful to him. Dr. Alexander makes no claim that Vermont owes its existence to Duane, along with others; but the assertion is not likely to astound him.

James Duane, 1733-1797, was born in New York, the son of a prosperous merchant and his second wife, daughter of a Dutch business man named Ketteltas. He became an industrious and prosperous lawyer; led the Yorkers against the New Hampshire Grants, was a land speculator and developer; played an extremely important part in the Continental Congress, where he steadily supported Washington, and thus, so far as Congress could aid, helped Washington to

lead the American army to eventual victory. Congress was often reluctant to aid Washington, but Duane was a consistent supporter. In that respect, he was a figure of national importance, not as a leader, but as a very loyal supporter, of influence and persuasion. He was the first mayor of New York, under American rule, and capable. He gave sturdy support to the cause of the Constitution, in the New York convention which ratified it after a lengthy and bitter struggle, thus bringing the state which divided New England from the others into the federal system. As first United States district judge in New York, his greatest contribution was to bring the admiralty law of England into United States jurisprudence. He supported the Anglican or Episcopal church, as lay member and attorney, repeatedly, and was important in his work for King's College, later Columbia College. He married, in 1759, Mary Livingston, daughter of Robert, lord of Livingston Manor, and, admiring the manorial system, was less democratic than his father-in-law. He inherited, and later added to it by purchase, a tract of land called Duanesburgh, west of Schenectady, eventually of some 30,000 acres. This he settled and improved, painstakingly, and according to manorial principles which called for annual rent, slight service, payment in grain and fat hens as well as currency, and partnership in mills and crafts. Some tracts were to be sold in fee, but the general idea was to keep the estate as a personal domain.

Duane's connection with the New Hampshire Grants seems to have commenced in 1764, when, perhaps, he had intimation that the question propounded in 1750, as to the boundary of New York and New Hampshire, might soon be decided in favor of New York. At any rate, he was then interested in the proposed "Princetown." Two months after the royal decree which awarded what is now Vermont to New York, he went with Rutherford, under the guidance of Samuel Robinson of Bennington, to examine the region which lay along the Battenkill. On that trip, it was noted that the inhabitants of Bennington were peaceful and prosperous, as compared with the shiftless tenants of Rennselaerswyck, one of the manors near that of Livingston. It was also noted that there were twenty-one settlers and twenty-five who had made clearings in "Princetown."

After "Princetown" was patented, Duane, Kempe, and Rutherford bought all the rights of other associates. Princetown, about twelve miles by three, lay along the Battenkill, including most of Manchester, parts of Dorset, Sunderland, and Arlington, and corners

of Winhall and Sandgate. Remember Baker, cousin of the Allens, had set up a mill in an included part of Arlington, a year before Duane's visit. Duane's other New York grants or purchases, of which he owned the whole or a part, eventually, included Schlatter's Patent of 2000 acres in Bennington, which he obtained in 1765; a tract called West Cambden, most of which was in Sandgate, with a small corner in Arlington; Chatham, which was mostly in Dorset, but extended into Manchester and Rupert; Eugene, which took in most of Pawlet, much of Rupert, and bits of Danby and Dorset; Durham, which included most of Clarendon, part of Shrewsbury, Wallingford, Mount Holly, and probably a part of Rutland; and Socialborough, which took in most of Pittsford and Rutland.

Thus Duane held New York patents to a large part of the best lands along the Battenkill, Otter Creek, and in the heart of Bennington. This explains why New York was more conciliatory toward the eastern parts of the Grants, and why the bitter struggle came chiefly from the west. He insisted on the whole loaf, as to his own titles, but was willing to make easier compromises, as to the eastern portions. This policy had two advantages. By easier terms on the east, it could create a buffer region against New Hampshire. By demanding the full pound of flesh, on the west, where his own lands were staked out, he could, if successful, bring the best of the Battenkill and Otter Creek lands nearest Albany under his control. The map, which Dr. Alexander places opposite page 70, plus the fact demonstrated by him, that Duane led the New York faction, add a great deal to our knowledge of the situation. It makes the resulting difficulties obvious. Duane's purchases of Vermont lands, he said, cost him £3,370. When he lost them, they were said to be worth £100,000.

The book which Dr. Alexander has written is the first full biography of James Duane. He has explored every known source, manuscript or otherwise, including the extensive manuscript material pertaining to and written by Duane. He has sifted, examined, and judged. He has not been sentimental, romantic, or partial. Only a small portion of the material is discussed in his very readable book; but the manner of its construction indicates that it is a splendid example of sound biography, carefully documented, readable, and brief. It is the sort of biography which ought to be written, and read. We have need for it, as to many characters of primary interest in Vermont history, and, like this, of secondary interest, nationally. The



author has brought to our attention many factors in the history of Vermont which have not been properly treated by previous historians.

With Dr. Alexander's chapter on the New Hampshire Grants phase of Duane's career, some fault can be found. Perhaps it is instinctive for any Vermonter to look with suspicion on any statement of the controversy made by a New Yorker. But there is no bitterness or partisanship in suggesting here a few flaws which, after all, may have been almost necessary, for reasons of space. Had not Dr. Fox mentioned this chapter as, for its length, an unsurpassed statement of the controversy, it might have been passed over, here, without comment. However, since two eminent New York historians stand back of it, a discussion from Vermont source is in order, not to renew the ancient quarrel, but in hope that at some not far distant day, a new statement of the matter may be made, fair to both sides, and approved by both sides. Dr. Alexander has gone a very long way, by admitting that Duane was provincial in his attitude, and that a great deal of the controversy was due to unscrupulous speculators. In what follows, I take some of the major points of interest and omit some others which are also debatable.

First, I think the author is in error, in suggesting that the trouble began when Wentworth, governor of New Hampshire, wrote in 1749 asking Clinton, governor of New York, where the boundaries of New York might be. That may have been the start of actual trouble; but it was not the start of the situation which caused the trouble. It is true that the grant of James II in 1664 to the Duke of York, later Charles II, bestowed the tract from the west banks of Connecticut River to the east banks of Delaware Bay. What that meant to New York, as a province, is not yet clear. In 1749, New York did not touch the banks of Delaware Bay, or the banks of Connecticut River, unless it did the latter, north of Massachusetts. That was one reason why Wentworth might have assumed, with some justification, that the twenty-mile line east of the Hudson was his western boundary. Another reason was that, before the Massachusetts north line had been established, that province had made grants west of the Connecticut, and had erected a fort there, without New York opposition. After the north line of Massachusetts had been established, New Hampshire was definitely ordered by the British government to maintain that fort, which was west of the river, because it had now fallen within the boundaries of New Hampshire.

Of course, another reason for the trouble was that lines drawn in

London, from imperfect maps, and with little knowledge, were very uncertain; and decisions of controversies were extremely slow.

Wentworth's statement that, if the grant he made of Bennington should by His Majesty's determination fall within New York, it would be *void of course*, indicates that Wentworth thought so, but not that his principal could be bound thereby.

We are likely to confuse the relation of the British government, its provinces, its grants of land made through provincial governors, and the counties or towns set up by the provinces, with the more familiar relation of the United States to the States, their subdivisions, and their land grants, if any. There is a distinction of importance, because in the former case, the lands were Crown lands, and the provinces local governmental agencies deriving from the Crown, and subject to modification at the will of the Crown; whereas, in our federal system, the States started with sovereignty, and never gave up to the United States, control of their bounds, although they did surrender what political jurisdiction and title to land they held or claimed to hold, as heirs of the Crown, in western regions.

The charters of New Hampshire, or the patents of New York, performed two functions, under two capacities. They distributed lands belonging to the Crown, as agents of the Crown, to subjects of the Crown, in order that the wilderness obtained by the Crown, by right of discovery or conquest, might be reduced to the possession and cultivation of British subjects. A grant of Crown land thus made, if its conditions were fulfilled, and settlement actually established, was a contract between the Crown and the individual. The Crown itself could not revoke it.

The creation of boundaries for a minor political entity, whether a province, a county, or a town, was not, unless there were special compacts, anything more than the setting up of a subdivision of the sovereign power, and was alterable at will. Similarly, the States of New York and Vermont may now alter, at will, the bounds and the powers of political subdivisions. No contractual rights ordinarily exist, as to municipal bounds and powers.

Whether the famous decision of 1764 declaring the boundary of New York, north of Massachusetts and south of Canada "to be" the west banks of Connecticut River, meant that it *was to be*, from that time on; or that it had *always been so*, had not yet been determined. It was not a question of law, but a question of politics. Duane took the decree to mean that the boundary always had been so. There is

room to argue on his side. But the Crown, while it did not, at any time, make a definite commitment, gave strong reason for the belief that a disputed boundary was at last settled, and that no British subject who had made actual settlement of lands should be penalized because of a mistake, made in London, Portsmouth, or Albany, in favor of a new grantee who had made no settlement.

New York was willing to confirm the titles of New Hampshire Grants settlers, on payment of granting fees, or even, at one time, for half fees. At no time did New York seem willing to confirm the titles of actual settlers who had performed all the conditions of the grants by New Hampshire, without added fees. Cash, with which to pay fees, was very scarce. The settlers simply did not have it. But, by their labor in clearing and cultivating lands, building homes, erecting dams and gristmills and sawmills, constructing roads, etc., they had made a wilderness capable of supporting life, and had added greatly to the value of the lands. No better illustration of the increased value due to settlement can be shown than by the valuation of Duane's 67,000 acres, worth, when purchased, £3,370, and, after settlement, £100,000. The first valuation would make twenty acres worth a pound, in New York currency, or about \$2.50. One acre was thus worth 12½ cents. The labor bestowed upon the land by settlers made it worth, in later years, some thirty times as much. (Perhaps this estimate does not take into consideration the relative value of the pound, at different times.) However, it is obvious that land settled, cleared, cultivated, fenced, provided with grist and saw mills, roads, etc., was far more valuable than sheer wilderness. The attempt to take these improvements from those who had made them, unless they would pay fees again to a Crown agent, after already having paid fees to another Crown agent, in their purchase price, was unfortunate for Duane's welfare.

His Majesty in Council governed the colonies, and constituted the last court of appeal. The letter of the Earl of Shelburne to the governor of New York, dated April 11, 1767, gives more explicitly than anywhere else, the viewpoint of the King and his Council. It directs the governor of New York to make no new grants of these lands, and not to molest any person in the quiet possession of his grant *who can produce good and valid evidence of a deed from New Hampshire*, until further orders. It refers to the letter of December 11, 1766, declaring that the inhabitants of the Grants be not molested on account of territorial differences or disputed jurisdiction, "for whatever

Province the Settlers may be found to belong to, it should make no difference in their Property," provided their titles are good or they have long been in uninterrupted possession.

The letter further observes that the power of granting lands was vested in the governors for the purpose of accommodating, not distressing, settlers, especially the poor and industrious. The unreasonableness of obliging a very large tract of land to pay a second time the immense sum of thirty-three thousand pounds for no other reason than its being found necessary to settle the line of boundary was held so unreasonable as to require strictest inquiry, etc.

This letter, not so emphatic as the Order in Council of July 24, 1767, indicates very clearly the British government's attitude, namely, that a grant by a governor, followed up by actual settlement, should not be upset by mere changes or determinations of boundary. The grants made by New Hampshire were actually made in the name of the King, through his agent, the governor of New Hampshire. The letter very specifically states that settlers who could produce good and valid deeds under New Hampshire grants must not be molested.

Dr. Alexander does not wholly back up his statement that the alarm of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel resulted in the decree of 1767. The decree mentions the Society and the settlers as petitioners. The Society was powerful, and its president was the Archbishop of Canterbury, a member of the Council; but the terms of the decree, and the terms of the letter of Shelburne, indicate that some consideration was given to the claims of the settlers.

If the terms of the British instructions had been followed, the decision of the New York court, in the case of *Small v. Carpenter*, the first and most notable ejectment case, would have been impossible. The British government had required that grants by New Hampshire, followed by actual settlement, must be respected, thus making them valid as evidence. Duane and Kempe persuaded the friendly court that these charters and deeds were not valid, and could not be admitted. This was directly contrary to the decisions of the British government, which, in this respect, were law. It is not astonishing that the people of Bennington, who had sent Samuel Robinson to London, and knew the terms of the letter and decree of 1767, balked.

Dr. Alexander is in error when, page 76, he indicates that, immediately after the decision in the case of *Small v. Carpenter*, in 1770, the "stiff-necked Allens refused to see their large speculative holdings



made unprofitable without a fight." Ethan, at that time, according to the records, owned two rights amounting to some 720 acres, half in Poultney and half in Castleton, certainly not enough to make him a large speculative landholder. Ira had not yet come to Vermont, or, I think, made any purchases. The only member of the family who had settled was Remember Baker, Arlington miller. All the holdings of the Allen family, throughout, have not been traced, but I have traced those of Ethan Allen, in every Vermont town, granted before his death; and I am convinced that the Allens had no lands of importance in the Grants at this time.

When the actual settlers were declared evicted by New York courts, in defiance of British instructions that those who could show deeds under New Hampshire grants should not be molested, the actual settlers were naturally aroused. The speculative landholders, who had employed Ethan Allen to do their errands prior to the ejectment case, found a new hope in the all or nothing attitude of New York and James Duane. At last the matter was clear, and the settlers could be counted on to aid them. And they, the settlers.

Looking at what might have been, New York might have confirmed, without added fees, all the lands actually settled, under the terms of New Hampshire charters. It might have declared forfeited all the lands not settled as provided, thus obtaining the greatest part of the New Hampshire Grants for its own distribution, since very few of the towns were even sparsely settled, at that time. It could thus have obtained, also, the ungranted half of what is now Vermont. The New Hampshire charters, if enforced, gave no hope for the absentee speculators; and the British instructions made provision for actual settlers and no others.

Dr. Alexander errs, I think, on page 76, in his statement that New York speculators such as Duane had a sound legal case. They didn't. But the terms of appeal to England, as to legal cases, are defined by him; and the case of *Small v. Carpenter* does not fit in. The decisions of the King in Council, not as a court of appeal, but as an administrative body, thwart the contention that Duane had a sound legal case, as to the settlers.

When the author says, page 77, that every effort was made to persuade New Hampshire settlers to take confirmatory patents from New York, he omits one important effort. No effort was made to persuade them to obtain confirmatory grants without payment of new fees. In view of the royal decrees, it was no act of generosity

which suggested half fees and liberal financing. London had said that a second payment of fees was unjustifiable.

The evidence which the author presents of Duane's skill and moderation, in condemning the grant to Col. Howard of Hinsdale, may have another interpretation. This land was originally granted by Massachusetts to Connecticut, and was sold by Connecticut. When New Hampshire received the territory, or believed it did, it specifically confirmed the title of at least one settler within the "equivalent lands," and may have, by its grants to named individuals, confirmed the rights of other Massachusetts grantees. Duane's moderation in this case may have been due to a dislike for adding Massachusetts to New York's opponents. In view of the British orders not to molest those who had valid deeds under New Hampshire charters, was it generosity to offer such settlers 5000 acres for "only £300 in patent fees"? The Crown said it was unreasonable to ask them to pay any. They were settlers with good and valid deeds under New Hampshire grants.

The organized resistance of the settlers, the leadership of the Allens and several others, and the extensive land ownership of the Allens seem to have come after, and not before, the case of Small v. Carpenter. So long as there was reason to think that the settlers might have their titles confirmed without added payments, the speculators had no leg to stand on. As soon as the settlers were required to pay new fees, unjustifiable according to London, they welcomed those who would join them, with less substantial claims.

It is possible that the refusal of the British government to lend the use of its armed forces to carry out New York's ejectment decrees was a rejection of the validity of those decrees, which violated express instructions. It is also possible that the British government's indignation at Tyron's suggestion for payment of half fees, after it had declared the payment of any fees a second time to be unreasonable, may have had more weight than the pleas of the agents of Massachusetts and Connecticut.

All the way through, including the tentative decision of the Lords of Trade, in 1773, the British government consistently upheld the rights of those who had actually settled. That was sound and legal. The real basis for Duane's contentions, aside from his personal interests, seems to have been his idea that the subjection of the rebellious Yankees to his control would have been a good thing for British domination.

It seems incorrect to say, as Dr. Alexander does, pages 91-92, that, viewed realistically, the struggle for the Grants was between two groups of selfish speculators. It began as a struggle between the speculators of New York, who commenced their activities in 1764 or 1765, and the settlers on the Grants. It so continued at the time of the order of 1767, and until the ejectment case of 1770. Not till then did the Allens start their large purchases and acquire their leadership. No other group of New Hampshire speculators seems to have been active, until just before that time. Rather, the speculators' cause was defeated by the royal orders, until, in 1770, the flagrant disregard of those orders, by New York, gave them an opportunity to aid the settlers and thereby aid themselves in a policy of organized resistance and rapid settlement.

Duane, as a conciliator, might have separated the few settlers from the speculators, and won most of his lands. By forcing the settlers to seek the aid of others, he lost all.

## VERMONT LETTERS. A SERIES

### II

*This series of letters was begun in the issue of March, 1938. The delightful letter, which is printed in full below, was written about two centuries ago, but it holds in its simple and effective wording the grace and the charm of the Puritan lass who sent it to her mother who was at the time of the writing in Vermont—though we have not been able to discover just where. Our text is taken from a copy of the original which is, we are informed, in the Shelburne library. We are sure our readers will enjoy the letter—particularly the tea incident; and those of a meditative mind will find many themes in the letter's gentle and modest phrasing that are worthy of a moment's musing. Editor.*

Starbuck Plantation

Nantucket Island

September 20, 1745

*My own dear Mother,*

*It seems a very long time since you and my honored father and ever beloved brothers and sisters started for your new home.*

*But I suppose you have not at this writing reached your destination, and I think of you every day and all day long as marching and marching, following the lonely trail through the interminable forest and sometimes I am tempted to repine in that my father thought it best to move to that far away settlement.*

*But my grandfather tells me that the entertaining of that sentiment would be unworthy of the daughter of a pioneer, and since it was thought best for me to remain behind for a season I must improve my time to the best advantage. This I try to do with cheerfulness and Aunt Content is so kind as to say that I am of service to her in her household duties and in spinning and weaving.*

*Peradventure my letter shall be a puzzle to you, I hasten to say that I indite a paragraph or two at a time upon lei-*



sure, and whenever anything comes into my mind that I desire you to know, I straightway go to my uncles desk and set it down. I do this dear Mother that you may share in my pleasureable thoughts and may know of my daily life.

The principal news I have to tell is that my cousin Nathaniel Starbuck has returned to Boston from his late voyage to China and is now hourly looked for here.

There are divers preparations being made for his well-coming. My grandfather walks restlessly up and down the yard with his stout stick, peering anxiously up the roadway by which our traveler must come. Uncle Nathaniel says with pride, "The boy will have many stories to tell." Aunt Content flits about the house with a smile on her face and anon tears in her eyes, concocting the favorite dishes of which her son used to be fond, while dear old grandmother knits and knits, because she says Thaniel never wore any stockings but of my make, and I must have a supply for him to take on his next voyage.

I, even I am to have a new blue gown made from aunts last web which is the finest and softest piece of flannel ever made on the island.

My cousin has come. He is tall and lithe, with handsome hair and eyes, but his complexion is browned by ocean winds and eastern suns. He has brought a great many curiosities and presents for us all. One is a silken creamy shawl for me, woven and embroidered with beautiful flowers. Another is a gown of foaming canton crape as white as snow and they are so pretty I am sure I shall never dare to wear them.

Grandma says they shall be kept for my wedding, but Aunt Esther says it is not seemly for such thoughts to be put into a maidens head. Yet Aunt Content gave me a whole piece of linen from the fall bleach to be kept she said for a time of need.

Cousin has returned to Boston and yesterday he sent by a trusty messenger another sea chest.

In it a large box of tea, the first that was ever on the island, real Chinese tea, which Nat himself procured in

*China.* It is of a greenish color, with little shriveled leaves and when eaten dry has a pleasant spicy taste.

Perhaps when I have opportunity to send this letter I can enclose a sample quantity that you may see what it is like. He also sent by the same hand a letter saying when he returns to Nantucket the owner of the ship in which he voyaged, Captain Morris will come with him from Boston to pay us a visit.

We are making master preparations for visitors and if you will believe it the large parlor which has not been open since Aunt Mehitable's wedding is to be used. When I was admiring it this morning Aunt Esther rebuked me gravely saying "The bright things of this world are of short duration." But dear gentle grandma observed with a smile that it was natural and right that the young should admire beauty, at which Aunt Esther seemed displeased.

We have just had tidings that cousin Nat and his friend Captain Morris intend to arrive here on the 31st of December. Uncle Nathaniel says he will have a tea party and invite Lieutenant Macy's family and a few others to meet our distinguished guests and to sit the old year out and the new year in.

We cooked a bountiful dinner and our guests all came, I wore my new blue gown with some lace that grandma gave me in the neck and my own dear Mother's gold necklace. I tied back my curls that cousin Nat will not allow me to braid, with a blue ribbon which he bought me in London.

Aunt Esther said men dislike to see girls look so brave but grandpa kissed me, calling me a bonnie blue bell.

Aunt Content has been pestered in her mind because she knew not how to cook and serve the tea, and after our neighbors had assembled she confided to them her perplexity.

They all gathered about the tea chest smelling and tasting the fragrant herb.

Mrs. Lieutenant Macy said she had heard it ought to be well cooked to be palatable and Aunt Edward Starbuck said a lady in Boston who drank tea, told her it needed a

good quantity for a steeping which was the reason it was so expensive.

So Aunt Content hung the bright five gallon kettle on the crane and putting in a two quart bowlful of tea in it with plenty of water swung it over the fire. Aunt Esther and Lydia Ann Macy stayed in the kitchen to keep it boiling. While I was laying the table I heard Lydia Ann say "I have heard that when tea is drank it gives a youthful brilliance to the eyes and a youthful freshness to the complexion. I am fearful thy sister-in-law failed to put in a sufficient quantity of the leaves." So Aunt Esther put in another bowlful of tea in the kettle.

When the tea had boiled about an hour my cousin and Captain Morris arrived. The tea which had boiled down to about a gallon was poured into grandma's large silver tankard and carried to the table, and each guest was provided with one of her silver porringers, also with cream and lump of sugar. The captain talked to me before dinner and I told him before I knew that I was getting confidential, how you were all off in the wilds. He said, "enterprises was what the new country needed," and that it was not best to have Nantucket peopled entirely with Starbucks—that I was one of the old stock it was plain to be seen if my name was Wentworth. I saw Aunt Esther looking at me so sharply that I remembered she had often told me that it was not seemly for me to talk with men and presently became discreetly silent. But when dinner was announced, the Captain took me out and made me sit by him.

After grandpa asked the blessing on the food, Aunt Content said I have made a dish of tea for you but am fearful that I have not prepared it as it hath need and would like to have your own opinion.

Where upon my cousin and the captain looked and sniffed at the tea and my cousin made answer; as my loved mother desires my opinion I must needs tell her that a spoonful of this beverage which she has with such hospitable intent prepared for us would nearly kill any one of us here at this table. The captain then said laughingly that Aunt could keep the decoction for dye to color her woollens.

He further said he would, if she so desired instruct her how to draw the tea himself. And this young lady he continued turning to me shall make the first dish of the beverage used in Nantucket.

Dinner being over they all remained at the table except Captain Morris and myself (for aunt Content bade me assist him as he should direct).

We searched for a suitable vessel wherein to draw the tea. At last I saw Uncle Nathaniel's large gray stone pitcher into which our guest instructed me to put as much of the tea as I could hold between my thumb and forefinger for each person and an additional pinch for the pitcher.

Then he told me to pour upon it boiling water sufficient for us all, and set the pitcher on the coals and let it remain until it came to a gentle boil.

He was so kind as to say that it was the best dish of tea he ever drank.

We had a wholesome dinner and an enjoyable time withal. Cousin Nat. told stories and sang songs, in which Captain Morris joined and the Happy New Year took the place of good-byes when our neighbors left for their respective homes.

My cousins friend still lingers for the shooting and there is not much spinning or weaving done, it takes so much time for the cooking and eating and visiting. He is very agreeable and calls grandfather the Miles Standish of Nantucket. I heard him tell Uncle Nathaniel that we had good blood and that ever since he first became acquainted with cousin Nat he has had a great admiration for the Nathaniel Starbuck, and he said something about a wife.

Perhaps he remains here so long on Aunt Esthers account but dear me she is so prim (I write with all respect, dear Mother) and he is such a jovial gentleman I do not understand how such a union could be harmonious.

If he has regard for her it must be on account of the Starbuck blood.

Oh, my mother how can I tell you it is not for love of Aunt Esther that Captain Morris remains, but for me, your own little daughter.



*And all the Starbucks, indeed saving Aunt Esther, who declares with a quiet wrath that I ought to be put back in pinafores, have given consent that I shall be married and sail away with my husband in my husband's ship, to foreign parts to see for myself all the beautiful and wonderful things of which I have heard so much of late.*

*But I will not give my consent until I have that of my father and mother first, so there is a company being made up to go with my cousin Nathaniel and the captain, through the winter snows to your far away home.*

*I am sure dear Mother that you who knows my heart so well, will not think it unseemingly for me, that the Lord will guide your heart and that of my father to feel kindly disposed toward this gentleman for indeed he is of good repute, and is so kind as to be very fond of me, and I feel that if I have your consent and that of my father, together with your blessing I shall be very happy and take an honest pride in being his honored wife.*

*The captain declares laughingly that I am sending him off on a quest like a knight of old, to prove his love. I cannot help thinking it strange his wanting to marry me, and I said so one day he replied gravely that it was all on account of the tea which got into his head.*

*And indeed it may be so, for I was flighty and hardly shut my eyes to sleep at all the night after partaking of it, and even dear grandmother says she would not answer for the consequences of what she might be led to do were she to make use of it every day.*

*I send along with other articles a quantity of this famous tea, and a bit of the white crape that I shall, if so it seemeth best in the judgement of my honored father and dear mother, wear in good time as a wedding gown.*

*The household all join me in sending loving greeting to all. I remain now and ever your dutiful and affectionate daughter.*

*Ruth Starbuck Wentworth*

## POSTSCRIPT

I HOPE that readers of this issue of the *Proceedings* will ponder carefully the review by Mr. Clement of Dr. Alexander's study of James Duane of New York. It seems to me that Mr. Clement's interpretation of Duane's attitude toward Vermont is the only sound one; and I would go so far as to say that Doctor Alexander's discussion of the New Hampshire Grants angle of Duane's relation to Vermont is certainly fallible; and although Dr. Dixon Ryan Fox refers to the discussion as an unsurpassed statement of the controversy, I venture the comment that the treatment is very far from deserving such an accolade. I am willing to risk the statement that two-thirds of the trouble over the New Hampshire Grants resulted from downright chicanery on the part of said Duane. In any event, our readers interested in the ancient feud will find, I think, that there is point in Mr. Clement's analysis. As a minor matter, perhaps, I might suggest that to Doctor Alexander still the Allens were "stiff-necked" and they were unwilling to "see their large speculative holdings made unprofitable without a fight." At the time to which the author was referring, Ethan Allen owned less than 720 acres, as Mr. Clement points out, and Ira had not yet established residence in Vermont. The tendency to label the Allens as gamblers in Vermont lands has gone far enough, and I hope to be able to publish in the *Proceedings* what I trust will be a final study of a question tinted with popular imaginings, pseudo-historic inferences, and inept conclusions.

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Readers interested in the economic phases of Vermont's history should not miss this publication—*Iron Mining and Smelting in Bennington, Vermont 1786-1842*, by John Spargo, *Bennington Historical Museum Publications*, No. 2. Bennington is fortunate in having in the Honorable Frank E. Howe of *The Bennington Evening Banner* an editor with an interest in the history of his region. Mr. Howe initiated the discussion which led to the publication of Mr. Spargo's historical notes. Most of us who are interested in the state's economic history have believed that Moses Sage set up in Bennington the first

forge and blast furnace in Vermont. Mr. Spargo proves that we are wrong. Mr. Spargo tells us that the first iron was manufactured in Bennington by William Blodgett as early as June, 1786. The author traces the history of the Bennington Iron Company, which at one time reached a point where it was casting seven tons of pig iron daily, employing 150 men, and purchasing 500,000 bushels of charcoal for use through a spring and summer. Mr. Spargo is certainly correct in saying, "Few people in present day Vermont are aware of the extent to which iron was mined in many parts of the State in early days, or of the extent and importance of the iron industry as a whole, both mining and manufacturing. Large iron deposits have been profitably worked in many places, including Bennington, Brandon, Chittenden, Colchester, Highgate, Ludlow, Milton, Monkton, Pittsford, Shaftsbury, Swanton, Tinmouth and Woodford. A large deposit in Pownal was the subject of much interest in the early eighteen-seventies." His conclusion is that it is "almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of the iron industry in the economic development of Vermont during the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth. The story of the industry, its contribution to the life of Vermont, and its swift decline, is a theme well worthy of careful study and scholarly presentation."

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Just how much Vermont owes to its John Whittemores will never be completely told; most of them left no records other than the old deeds in a town clerk's office, a simple inscription on a village cemetery tombstone, a few heirlooms of one kind and another, and tales and stories told of them in family traditions. So it is good to have such a quietly written, serenely phrased story as that we publish in this issue, for John Whittemore is speaking in behalf of the many who will never speak to us of old, far off, happy and unhappy things. Just how well they builded can be suggested in this incident. Three of us far back in an abandoned farm section of Vermont came across a stonewall, standing sturdily amid the desolation. Said one: "What a symbol of wasted hope, useless labor, and final futility and defeat!" Said another: "Every stone lifted by toiling hands to that wall contributed its part to the building of the state we now know and America honors. Long live Vermont!"

A. W. P.

